Interview with Stuart W. Rockwell

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR STUART W. ROCKWELL

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

Initial interview date: October 5, 1988

Q: Mr. Ambassador, what attracted you to the Foreign Service?

ROCKWELL: I was at college and in school very much interested in foreign languages. I majored in French and Spanish at Harvard College, and when I graduated from college, it seemed to me that a good place to use foreign languages and to acquire greater skill in them would be the Foreign Service.

Q: Had you been deliberately taking courses that would prepare you for the Foreign Service?

ROCKWELL: No. I only took courses that would increase my knowledge of foreign languages.

Q: How did this translate into getting into the Foreign Service when the time came?

ROCKWELL: I have to confess that when I decided to go into the Foreign Service, I had to go to a so-called “cram school,” as there were certain parts of the Foreign Service examination, such as maritime law and the law in general, and to a lesser extent, economics, that my college education had not covered.

Q: When was this?

ROCKWELL: This was in 1941 that I entered the Foreign Service. I took the exams in 1940.

Q: Did you see the handwriting on the wall, as far as where the world was going at that time?

ROCKWELL: I don't think I had any very profound thoughts at that time. I just wondered what I was going to do with myself next.

Q: You came into the Foreign Service, I would assume, before Pearl Harbor.

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: What sort of training did you get to prepare you, once you were in the Foreign Service?

ROCKWELL: I had no training at all. I went directly to my first post and had on-the-spot training.

Q: This was Panama.

ROCKWELL: Panama.

Q: You were a vice consul?

ROCKWELL: Vice consul in the passport and visa section.

Q: What would a brand-new vice consul do at that time?

ROCKWELL: Largely passport services for American citizens in the Canal Zone.

Q: I assume, particularly when the war started, there must have been quite a few restrictions, and you must have had to be particularly vigilant as far as who was an American citizen and that sort of thing, weren't you, at the time?

ROCKWELL: We didn't have to worry too much about that, because the Canal Zone authorities vouched for their own people. We were dealing, obviously, with mainland types, not American citizens of foreign origin. They were all hometown U.S.A. people living in the Canal Zone.

Q: Then after that assignment, you entered the military service.

ROCKWELL: After I did a stint in the consular section, I went into the political section of the embassy. After my tour in Panama, I went into the military.

Q: What were the political concerns of the United States in Panama that you would deal with?

ROCKWELL: They were largely directed toward the nature of the Panamanian government and its relations with the Axis powers, particularly under President Arnulfo Arias, who was considered, with good reason, to be pro-Axis.

Q: What would we do about it? Were we able to do anything? We were pretty much top dog at that time.

ROCKWELL: We didn't do anything directly about it. Arias made the mistake of leaving the country when he shouldn't have. He was not authorized. While he was away, the National Assembly voted him out of office, in effect.

Q: Did you get involved in snooping around to find out what the Axis influence was?

ROCKWELL: We were involved in observing the Panamanian political scene. There was, to my recollection, not a great amount of Axis influence in the country itself. But what

there was, was largely in the economic field. I mean, there were trans-shipments through Panama to Germany that required close observation on our part.

Q: You moved from Panama, you went into the military, and then you were in Ankara from 1946 to '48. Then you were on the Palestine-Israel-Jordan desk.

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: We don't want to go over the same ground as elsewhere. Was this fairly well covered in your interview in the Truman Library, do you feel? Relations particularly with Israel at the time.

ROCKWELL: Yes, that was the main thrust of the Truman Library interview.

Q: Any thoughts on areas that they might not have covered?

ROCKWELL: This was some years ago. I must say I don't recall exactly. They were interested in the background of our relationships with the Zionists, and then with the State of Israel after it was established, as well as the maneuvering within the Congress and within the State Department concerning the establishment of the state of Israel.

Q: Did this type of assignment come out of the blue, or had you been ready? Because having both Panama and Turkey really didn't prepare one for dealing with the Palestinian problem.

ROCKWELL: No, it was quite fortuitous, largely because the Department of State, foreseeing that there would be trouble in Palestine when the Mandate ended in 1948, transferred all the married officers out of the Consulate General in Jerusalem and replaced them with single people either from Washington or from neighboring posts. I was detailed from Ankara to Jerusalem.

Q: On another project, I spoke to you several years ago about your time in Palestine at this point, but I wonder if you could recount a little. What were you doing? You were caught between two fires there, weren't you, in the Consulate General in Jerusalem?

ROCKWELL: Yes. The Consulate General was located in what became the Israeli sector. We also had access to the Jordanian side and would occasionally go to Aman, also to report on the situation there. Basically, however, we were pinned down during the fighting and were merely doing our best to report what was going on. Of course, the Consul General had an important capacity as a member of the three-man Peace Commission in Jerusalem, and as such, he met with his counterparts in the French and Turkish embassies, and also dealt with the Jewish authorities before the establishment of the state.

Q: Were you able to develop contacts at that point in both Jordan and Israel that you were able to use later on in your later career?

ROCKWELL: Some of us were, especially the person who was detailed to cover the Jordanian side of things. I did meet again, during the course of my career, people whom I knew in Jerusalem, but I was never assigned again to Israel, although I dealt with Israel in Washington.

Q: I'd like to move briefly through your career so we can concentrate on your more senior ranks. You were in Madrid from 1952 to '55. What type of work were you doing at that time?

ROCKWELL: I was chief of the Political Section in Madrid.

Q: What was our attitude at that point towards Franco?

ROCKWELL: Our attitude was favorably neutral, I would say. In other words, we did not approve of him, but we had no quarrel with him.

Q: As the chief of the political section, how would you organize your office, as far as how would you assign officers, for example.

ROCKWELL: We had them divided on Spanish foreign affairs and Spanish domestic affairs and intelligence, dealing with Spain. At that time, Spain had a protectorate in Morocco. Of course, the relations between Spain and the European nations were strained. On the domestic side, there was more or less a stagnant situation, because no meaningful political parties other than the official ones were tolerated. So it was a rather static situation. The major thrust, I think, of the Political Section was to give to Washington an idea of how the ordinary Spaniards were living under the regime, how they felt toward it, and what the regime's relationships with the European countries were. Obviously, Spain's relations with us at that time were somewhat controversial since there were many people in this country, particularly in the Congress, who felt strongly unfavorable to the Franco regime.

Q: Did that have much of an effect on the operations at the embassy?

ROCKWELL: No.

Q: The heat was pretty well absorbed in Washington at that time.

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: In moving on, you were in the War College in 1956, and then you became the Director of N.E., which stood for Near East, from 1957 to 1960. Since the various bureaus keep changing their areas of jurisdiction, in 1957, what did N.E. cover?

ROCKWELL: It covered all the Levantine Arab states, Near Eastern Arab states. By that I do not mean Tunisia and Morocco and Algeria, but Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, the Sudan, and also Israel.

Q: How was this set up? You were the director, and then under you?

ROCKWELL: There was a deputy director. Then we had desk officers in charge of the individual countries.

Q: You reported to whom at that time?

ROCKWELL: To the Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asian Affairs.

Q: Who was that at the time?

ROCKWELL: It was Bill Rountree, I guess, at that time. This is '57 to '60.

Q: This is '57 to '60, because I know you came back later on and did pretty much the same thing. How did things work for you? You were there at an interesting time, because you were there during the invasion or the landings in Lebanon, and [Gamal Abdel] Nasser was a major player at the time. As the director, how did you operate? What type of work did you yourself do?

ROCKWELL: I suppose most of it was the normal work of an office director, in the sense that there is the daily flow of messages coming in that require an answer or analysis. There are the meetings with other elements in the department on joint positions; there are meetings with other agencies of the government on problems that involve them; there's the constant need to prepare briefing papers for the superior officers in the department, particularly if there's some event coming up like the visit of a foreign statesman or a trip by the Secretary overseas. One has to respond constantly to the Congress and their concern over matters that require attention. Then there are the dealings with the local embassies, the foreign embassies. I think the normal function of an office director.

In our case, we had a rather unusual situation in that Mr. Dulles was very much interested personally in the Palestine issue, and so we were constantly on call directly from him for meetings, often on weekends at his residence.

Q: In what form would his interest take? Did he want to look for a solution, or did he just want to keep informed on what was happening?

ROCKWELL: Oh, no, he wanted to be directly involved in the solution of problems that occurred, particularly in the direction of policy, because he had very strong ideas. He, as you know, tended to consider that these regional issues were part and parcel of our relationship with the Soviet Union and with the Communist Bloc as a whole. Therefore, what was done in the local context or regional context, in his view, frequently either had repercussions in our relations with the Russians, or were due to maneuvers by the Russians affecting us.

Q: From your vantage point, did you see the situation differently, as really a locally generated situation which the Russians were taking advantage of, or did you see it as one where the Soviet Union was stirring things up?

ROCKWELL: I think that we saw it much more as a manifestation of Arab nationalism, particularly insofar as the activities of Nasser were concerned, and in regard to Lebanon, as a result of the factional differences between the confessions in that country, much more in that context than as either a result or a consequence of Russian maneuvering.

Q: Did you have sort of a continuing dialogue with Secretary Dulles to try to have him see this thing within a more local context, rather than a broader one?

ROCKWELL: I think one would have to know Secretary Dulles to know that once he got an idea and made up his mind, there was no point having a dialogue. He was determined and

he was dedicated and he was convinced, and he directed the policy on the grounds of the primordial importance of relations with the Soviet Union.

Q: How did he view Nasser?

ROCKWELL: As an agent of the Russians, a mischief-maker, an agent of the Russians. And he felt particularly bitter about him because he felt that Nasser had betrayed him in connection with the Aswan Dam, that Nasser had been using us against the Russians as a bargaining chip, and that especially when members of Congress began to put heavy pressure on Secretary Dulles, he decided that Nasser had misused us and that we should not go along any longer.

Q: Had the Aswan Dam crisis occurred at the time you were on the desk? Did you have any role in this?

ROCKWELL: Not really. That was carried out at a pretty high level, and the World Bank was involved, the British, the French, and the Treasury.

Q: For the record, I wonder if you could explain what it was.

ROCKWELL: The project was to create the Aswan Dam and how to get financing. The Egyptians turned to us and the World Bank and anybody who might be inclined to help them, including the Russians. Of course, it was the Russians who built it in the end, after we had decided not to go along and had withdrawn our offer of help. The Russians built the dam, and the whole thing, in my opinion, turned out very badly from our point of view. It goes to show how important, at least at that time, the individual reactions to the actions and activities of other individuals could be.

Q: So we're really talking about a personality antipathy that built up there.

ROCKWELL: That's right.

Q: Was anybody able to say, "But Mr. Secretary, if we turn this down, the only other logical place to go is with the Soviets. If you're anti-Soviet, you're leaving a wide-open hole for them to move into"? Or was this foreseen?

ROCKWELL: That was, of course, one of the points that was made, but the answer to that often was, "Well, we're not sure the Soviets can do it. If they want to do it and spend all that money, so be it. But we are not going to deal with somebody who is as unreliable and as treacherous as Nasser." Especially when the Congress was up in arms about Nasser's attitude toward Israel.

Q: How did we feel about Nasser, not only there, but also as a force within the Arab world?

ROCKWELL: When Nasser came to power, we made, I think, quite a sincere effort to cultivate him and to turn his energies into a useful direction, as far as we were concerned. We tried to protect our friends against him, like the Jordanians and the Iraqis. And that was the reason that we went along as far as we did on the Aswan Dam project, because we thought it might help to bring Nasser more or less in line with our own goals.

Q: In line with Nasser, there were two events at this time that come to mind. One was the overthrow of the Iraqi monarch, which was rather closely followed by our landing in Lebanon. Were you involved in the preparations and the negotiations for the Lebanese landing?

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: How did you see it at the time, and what were you doing on this particular situation?

ROCKWELL: We were dealing, in effect, with the Lebanese, especially Charles Malik and Camille Chamoun, the president and the foreign minister, both of whom were Christians. We were trying to help them defend themselves and their country against what we considered at that time to be the efforts of the Syrians and the Egyptians to undermine the

sovereignty of Lebanon on behalf of the Muslim segment of the population. In accordance with the Eisenhower doctrine, we were telling these people that we would help them if there was any organized effort to undermine their sovereignty. So in effect, we gave them a pledge which they held us to. One of the reasons that we agreed to go in there, which had a salutary effect, that we should have gone in, I think, was because Mr. Dulles was convinced that the Russians were goading the Egyptians and the Syrians to undo the sovereignty of Lebanon as a Western ally.

In retrospect, I think it's quite clear that the Russians were not doing that. It was merely that the forces of Arab nationalism were operating against what many of them considered to be a Christian monopoly of power in Lebanon, and a tendency by the Christian leaders to subordinate Arab interests to those of the Western powers.

Q: Did we find ourselves particularly attracted towards the Christians in Lebanon because of like religion?

ROCKWELL: There was no doubt about it, in the long history of American involvement on the Christian side, the American University in Beirut, the fact that Malik himself was educated in the United States was a very persuasive interlocutor. I think there was a great deal of sympathy for the Christians in Lebanon.

Q: Did the situation in Iraq, when King Faisal was not overthrown, but killed, at the same time by a military coup, did that have any effect on how we viewed the Middle East?

ROCKWELL: There were those who thought that having landed in Lebanon, we should try to do something militarily to undo the coup in Iraq, but they were not listened to. Actually, the Iraqi revolution, we knew nothing about, and we didn't anticipate it. There again, I don't think the Russians had anything to do with it.

Q: Did we see this as a part of a movement of unrest that was going to sweep us out of the area?

ROCKWELL: Yes. There was great concern that it was the beginning of destruction of Western and American influence in the Middle East.

Q: During this time I was a young vice consul in Dhahran in Saudi Arabia, and we felt very nervous about the situation there, too, because we noticed that thermos jugs had Nasser's picture on them. Nasser's picture was everywhere in the marketplace, and there was a feeling that anything might spark an overthrow of the Saudi monarchy and putting a hostile group in. We felt that Arab nationalism was hostile to the United States.

Were there any voices within the State Department that were saying, “Maybe we shouldn't do this”?

ROCKWELL: There were a number of voices in N.E. which were saying that, but they were obliterated by the overall domination and policy by Foster Dulles, who saw it, as I said, very decidedly in the context of a super power confrontation.

Q: So looking at the operations of the State Department at that time in a critical area—and you were down in the engine room of the State Department—our policy was very definitely run by the Secretary of State.

ROCKWELL: No doubt of it.

Q: With no real chance for whatever expertise or what have you to maybe deviate somewhat in one direction or another.

ROCKWELL: I don't want to give you the impression that the place was full of doubters, because I don't recall that people like Rountree or myself or anybody else really had that much of a conviction that Dulles was wrong. I mean, he was so eloquent and there was no doubt the Russians were stirring things up, it suited them fine. It seemed a good idea that they should be stopped from doing that.

Q: Looking back on it, from a practical measure, the landing in Lebanon did seem to work at the time. It froze things.

ROCKWELL: Yes, but it had nothing to do with the Russians. I mean, it deterred the Egyptians and the Syrians, so it served its purpose, but I'm not sure what would have happened if we hadn't landed, in the sense that I'm not sure that the government there would have been overthrown by hostile forces. But in any event, there was that very strong feeling that if we did not live up to our pledge to Chamoun and Malik, that we would be considered to be a pretty weak influence in the area. So I think, on the whole, it worked out pretty well, but I think we were very lucky. Only one Marine was killed, I think, and that was in an auto accident of some kind.

Q: As compared to our efforts in the last few years, in which we landed Marines and had almost 300 killed, plus the whole place fell apart. As we're speaking now, it's still badly divided, with little prospect that in the future it'll put itself together.

At that time, Europe certainly held our interest, because this was the main front line against the Soviets. Did they tend to dominate the workings of the State Department? From what you say, it looks like Dulles did give quite a bit of attention to your operations.

ROCKWELL: Well, no. As a matter of fact, of course, Dulles and Eisenhower worked very strongly against the French and the British in the Suez Canal operation, so I mean, it wasn't as if on that particular issue that the Europeans were able to throw our policy off the tracks. It was considered very unfriendly by them.

Also, in connection with the Aswan Dam issue, the Europeans went along more or less, except for the Russians, of course, along with our views about that. So I think that European influence had certainly no negative effect, and maybe some positive effects on our policy in the area.

Q: How about our dealings with Israel? This has always been a very controversial subject, the feeling that the State Department professionals are dominated by Arabists, whatever that means. I mean, in other words, it's almost as though they are a group that are friends of the Arabs and by nature, then, are opposed to the Israelis and to Jews. It must have been a very difficult position to have been Director of N.E. Affairs, with a Congress which is basically much more friendly towards Israel for domestic reasons and maybe just personal feelings towards the area than toward the Arab world.

ROCKWELL: Yes, that's true.

Q: What sort of pressures came on you? Were there pressures?

ROCKWELL: Indeed there were. There are constant pressures—congressional letters, “Why are you doing this? Why aren't you doing that?” Constant visits by Israeli officials to press their point of view. People within the government who have nothing to do with the State Department, involving themselves in matters such as loans and the like to Israel, whether or not to grant a loan. Every facet of policy making seemed to come into contact with someone who had a very strong feeling about Israel.

Q: And from a practical point of view, the strong feeling was support of Israel rather than opposed to Israel.

ROCKWELL: That's right.

Q: As the professional paid to look at the area and see the balance, you see a large number of Arab states who are violently opposed to Israel. Israel is basically a small country without great strategic significance, as far as oil reserves or anything else. Did you find yourself trying to be the voice, to explain that there is something else in the Middle East besides Israel?

ROCKWELL: Yes. Of course, we used to do that. We used to go out on speaking tours, to audiences, to explain what our policy was and why it was the way it is, and what we thought. But after all, Israel is an independent state, it's a friendly state—it was a friendly state. It has strong connections with many American citizens who feel very strongly about it, and there's certainly no place, in my view, in an office like the Office of Near East Affairs, for somebody who's biased against one of the most important states in the area. Then one has to remember, too, that the Arabs are their own worst enemies. They make it very difficult to defend them by the things they did and continue to do.

So I didn't come to that office with any Arab experience at all. I had no particular predilection for the Arabs or for the Israelis, for that matter. I just felt that one had to deal with both, and they had their point of view. If one is to be effective, one had to understand those points of view, not seem to be espousing one or the other.

Q: Did you have a problem with your various desk officers, to have them see both what our policy was and, at the same time, to present their cases without having them appear biased?

ROCKWELL: These people who were desk officers, they were all good officers. They were realistic, they understood the atmosphere with regard to Israel in this country. There were none of them whom I would consider to be rabidly pro-Arab to the point where their judgment was clouded or where their actions were biased. They understood. They would have preferred other policies and other actions because of their interest in the Arab world. They accurately foresaw that if certain things were done, the reaction in the Arab world would be very negative. But at no time did I feel that any of them were undermining our policy or speaking against it in any inappropriate way, because they were realists, they were professionals, and they knew that, in effect, no other policy was likely to be established.

Q: Did you feel that there was a problem within the bureau, anything that was written that would be considered by an outsider to be unfavorable to Israel, that would immediately end up in the hands of a columnist or in the Israeli Embassy?

ROCKWELL: That was always a possibility. We felt that there were people in the government—not necessarily in the State Department, but possibly also in the State Department—who could not be relied on not to make these documents available. I don't think that that constrained people to any great degree.

Q: There wasn't the feeling, then, "I'd better say the right things or I may be tarred with an anti-Israel brush, and I'll never move ahead in my career because of Congress"?

ROCKWELL: No. I don't think that people were that intimidated. Obviously, there were those who were considered by the Congress or by Friends of Israel, particularly American Jews who were interested in the problem, who were considered to be less friendly than others to Israel. But I don't believe they ever could make a good case that their recommendations were strongly biased or prejudiced in any unreasonable way. It's just that they obviously tried to produce a balanced perspective, and in so doing, they had to describe what they considered to be the Arab interests as they saw them.

Q: Was there any sort of back channel type operation going on at the time? Were people saying, "I can't put this on paper, but let me tell you what I think or what is going on here," or this type of thing?

ROCKWELL: I imagine there probably was, but at a very high level. I didn't have any personal knowledge of it.

Q: I'd like to move on to your time from 1960 to '65 in Tehran. You went out there under the Eisenhower Administration. The ambassador at that time was Edward T. Wailes?

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: Had he asked for you?

ROCKWELL: No. I don't believe he had. I think that the person who assigned me out there was Loy Henderson.

Q: In these interviews, I keep running across references to Loy Henderson running into people on the way to the men's room or walking down the corridor or something, and saying, "Where are you going?" They'll say, "I've been assigned to such and such." He says, "Oh, you don't want to go there." Apparently, he kept a very close eye on assignments and was always sort of moving out of the system. Did he ask you if you wanted to go or get involved in that assignment at all?

ROCKWELL: As I recall it, he merely told me that that's where he wanted me to go. So it sounded like a good place to go.

Q: What was the situation in Iran? We're talking about the period of 1960 to '65, when you went out there as deputy chief of mission.

ROCKWELL: That was the period when the Shah started his so-called White Revolution, when he had achieved victory over the oil companies to the point that Iranian revenue from oil was greatly increasing, and when his ambitions for modernizing his country were at their height, and when his own position within the country as a result of the prosperity that was beginning to be felt throughout, was at the highest. So although there were problems, he didn't really permit any kind of full-fledged free political participation. The secret police were always to be thought about if you did criticize the regime too strongly.

Nonetheless, it was a good time for most Iranians and certainly for educated ones, because the country was booming.

Q: Moving to the operational side, each ambassador uses his DCM in a different way. Was there any difference between the way Wailes and then later, Julius Holmes, who took his place, did they use you in about the same way? They were both career ambassadors.

ROCKWELL: Julius Holmes was much more directly involved than Tom Wailes was, so under Holmes, there was less substantive work for the DCM to do than there was under Wailes.

Q: What do you mean when you say "substantive work?"

ROCKWELL: I mean that Julius Holmes was an interested formulator of policy and somebody who desired to be directly involved in dealing with the Iranians at a high level, whereas Tom Wailes was much less vigorous in that sense, and really preferred to have things brought to him and form his own views and make his comments on the basis of what he was given.

Q: What would Holmes do with you, then, when he was your ambassador?

ROCKWELL: He would rely on the DCM principally for the administration of the embassy. At that time, we had the other elements there, like the Armish MAAG and the mission to the Gendarmerie and the economic aid mission. There were constant meetings and Country Team meetings and that kind of thing.

Q: What was our interest in Iran at the time?

ROCKWELL: It eventually became strongly political and strongly economic, as well, because Iran became one of our best customers for many, many things. But we had, of course, a long history of involvement with Iran, going back to the time when the Shah came back from exile and to our role in the Azerbaijan crisis, when the Russians wouldn't leave Azerbaijan after the war and tried to set up a regime there. Iran seemed to be an important Middle Eastern country which was not involved in the Palestine crisis, and which

seemed to have interests which paralleled ours, particularly as regards the Russians, under the monarchy, of course. Then of course, there was the oil, which was of interest, too. So we had major stakes in Iran.

Q: You could view this from both the Washington perspective and out in the field. Was there a difference between the approach to the area between the Eisenhower Administration and the Kennedy Administration?

ROCKWELL: Yes, very decidedly. The Kennedy Administration was much more concerned than the Eisenhower one about the political regime and the political situation in Iran, in the sense that the Kennedy Administration thought that American influence should be directed toward influencing the situation in Iran in the direction of a more democratic administration.

Q: Looking at it now from the perspective of at least 20 years-plus later, there have been arguments saying that the effort to bring reform in essentially a very conservative country created resentments which led to the eventual overthrow of the Shah. As far as the embassy was concerned, was anybody saying, "Wait a minute. We better not be doing this." At least sponsoring democratic reforms?

ROCKWELL: Quite the contrary. If there was any objection within the embassy, it came from people who felt we weren't doing enough. In effect, we really weren't doing very much, especially when I was there, because nobody had any idea that the Mullahs—in fact, I don't believe that the Mullahs had any influence or were organized at all at that time. But in any event, nobody on the Iranian side and nobody on the American side paid any attention to the Mullahs. Things were going so well for the average Iranian, as long as he could overcome his aversion to working with the regime, that there were no real centers of opposition to the regime. In fact, the regime, during the time that I was there, really took over of its most vocal critics who were lured back to the country from critical exile by the new jobs that were created.

So if anybody says that we did too much and that had much to do with what eventually happened, I certainly don't agree with that.

Q: What were we doing, just expressing our hope that things would get better?

ROCKWELL: Especially under the Kennedys, the ambassador was instructed to talk to the Shah about the need to create a bridge to the middle class and to relax the controls that he was exercising on the political process. We also kept in touch discreetly with the opposition, such as it existed at the time. Later on, after I left, especially under Henry Kissinger, the orders were to stop interfering in the Shah's business.

Q: There is some bitterness about the fact that we deliberately cut ourselves off from any opposition movement. Traditionally our role is to talk to everybody, at least everybody who is halfway legitimate.

ROCKWELL: That, of course, is the way it should be. The problem in Iran was that the Shah was paranoid about anybody, especially American diplomats, talking to the opposition. He certainly was able to find out rather quickly whether there had been any such talk, and he left no doubt that he was not pleased, and if this continued, that the people involved would be asked to leave the country.

Q: But at the time you were there, you could talk?

ROCKWELL: You could up to a point, but if you talked to somebody like Ali Amini, for example, who was one of the better of the politicians, from our point of view, but whom the Shah did not like because he was jealous of him and thought that he wasn't loyal, if you talked with him, it soon got back to the Shah, and the Shah let it be known that he didn't wish this to continue, or else there would be a request for departure on a non grata basis.

Q: When you were there, was the Shah very much in control of everything?

ROCKWELL: Oh, yes.

Q: It was the Shah, not advisors.

ROCKWELL: That's right. Nobody counted for anything but the Shah.

Q: The Shah was calling the shots. How did you find the embassy staffed? Was it a good operating staff?

ROCKWELL: In any group, some are better than others. We had some outstanding people and we had some mediocre ones.

Q: Going back to the time you were there, did you find that the American presence was overwhelming, as happened later on when we were putting so much military equipment in?

ROCKWELL: No. It was not overwhelming when I was there, but it became so later, I understand.

Q: What about our military involvement or military aid? Was this a major program?

ROCKWELL: Yes, it was a large-scale program.

Q: Was it at about the level that you felt was correct for the situation?

ROCKWELL: As far as I could see, it was correct. We were constantly involved in trying to curb the Shah's appetite for new equipment, but insofar as the military presence was concerned and the kind of training that was done, it seemed quite appropriate.

Q: Were there any splits on how to deal with the Shah regarding his desire for military equipment? Was the American military trying to sell more to him and the State Department side was holding back, or vice versa?

ROCKWELL: It wasn't the military so much as the civilian manufacturers of various things like airplanes that were causing most of the trouble, because they would whet the Shah's appetite in sending out people and giving him demonstrations and whatnot. I think our military was thoughtful enough to realize that you couldn't overload the circuit. They didn't feel as strongly as the State Department did, though.

Q: This is an unclassified interview, but how did you find the CIA there? Was it an effective instrument or was it too much in bed with Savak? That's the secret police.

ROCKWELL: The CIA was certainly closely involved with Savak. I didn't feel that they were doing anything in their daily operations that was inappropriate. I never was sure just what they were doing. In the sense that I know they're supposed to tell the embassy everything, you never know for sure that they are. Certainly when Yatsevitch was head of the CIA there, he had a relationship with the Shah and the royal family that was extremely close, and I felt inappropriately so.

Q: How did this translate as far as you were concerned?

ROCKWELL: It translated into sort of back-channel messages and meetings with the Shah without the presence of the ambassador, which I didn't think was right.

Q: How did the ambassador feel about this?

ROCKWELL: Wailes didn't seem to mind. Holmes did mind and put a stop to it as far as we knew.

Q: How about the information that was shared with you from the CIA? Did you find CIA was giving you a different perspective than, say, the political section? Or were they duplicating?

ROCKWELL: No, they seemed to be pretty much in tune as far as local developments are concerned.

Q: As you say, at the time, the local scene was not unfavorable to what we wanted.

Then we move from 1965. You came back to Washington and you served in NEA as the Deputy Assistant Secretary in NEA, which stands for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs. What were your responsibilities?

ROCKWELL: Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, and Iran.

Q: So you moved away from the Palestinian side of things.

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: Greece and Turkey later were moved into European affairs. How was the situation at the time? This is under the Johnson Administration for part of this period, and then into the early Nixon period, too. What was our interest in Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus at that time, '65 to '70?

ROCKWELL: Greece and Turkey were NATO members. We all know the strategic position of Turkey and the Straits, the Greek connection with air bases. Also, the Greek-American community is an influential one here. Turkey has one of the largest, if not the largest, number of people under arms in NATO. Turkey had taken part very honorably in the Korean War. I think that our interests were the traditional ones in that strategic part of the world.

Q: If I recall now, this is the time of the Cyprus problem. Was that at a particular boil during this time? It goes up and down from time to time.

ROCKWELL: I'm sort of unclear about the exact timing. Of course, when I was there in that position, the Greek Government tried to overthrow Makarios and to bring about enosis between Cyprus and Greece.

Q: Enosis is the word for "union."

ROCKWELL: Yes. So that was a big crisis, and that resulted in the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. So that was a boiling point.

Q: The Turkish invasion came in '74, didn't it?

ROCKWELL: I don't remember the exact date.

Q: Cyprus is always a problem. Did you have much of a lobbying effort on the part, say, of the Greek-American lobby?

ROCKWELL: Yes, there were a great many people who were opposed to the Greek colonels, and there were people like Tom Pappas, who were very favorable to the Greek colonels.

Q: Tom Pappas was a Greek-American citizen who was head of Esso Petroleum, I think.

ROCKWELL: Yes, he was a businessman and he was, as I recall it, very much in favor of the colonels.

Q: Also, he was very influential in Republican politics. I know because as an aftermath of the Watergate business, I had to serve a subpoena on him because he was on the Republican Finance Committee and was part of the investigation. I had to subpoena him when he was in Athens, when I was consul general there.

What was the attitude of the Johnson and then the Nixon Administration toward Greece and Turkey, sort of a plague on both your houses? Did they try to leave it to the professionals, or did they get very much involved?

ROCKWELL: I think they left it more to the professionals. There was a general feeling that the Greeks and the Turks were constantly asking for too much money, and that we should give them what was needed in order to achieve our interests there, but that we'd been helping there for many, many years and that it was time to taper off. I think there was not a tremendous amount of interest, especially in Turkey, more in Greece than in Turkey.

Q: And in Greece it was really more because it was an unpopular regime.

ROCKWELL: Yes. However, the Nixon Administration, especially under Henry Kissinger, didn't feel very uncomfortable with the Greek regime.

Q: Just for the record, there was an overthrow of a democratic government in 1967 in Greece led by Colonel Papadopoulos, and that regime lasted until 1974.

The National Security Council was run by Henry Kissinger during part of that time when you were there, from '69 to '70. Did you feel the National Security Council was very interested in the area, or was Vietnam absorbing most of their efforts?

ROCKWELL: What period are you talking about?

Q: You were in from 1965 to '70. You were the deputy assistant secretary for NEA. Nixon came in in 1969. So you would have had 1969 and part of 1970 before you went to Rabat.

ROCKWELL: Yes. I don't recall that the NSC got very much involved.

Q: That really answers the question. There were other things to do done.

ROCKWELL: We used to have to go over there and explain what we wanted to do. Henry Kissinger would sit there and listen, but he didn't intervene. He didn't seem to be particularly concerned about it.

Q: It was only, I think, that he got rather involved later in the '75-'76 period.

You were appointed as ambassador to Rabat, Morocco, from 1970 and you served there until 1974. How did that assignment come about?

ROCKWELL: I believe it came about because somebody else was appointed that didn't get through the Senate. So I was the State Department's candidate. The one who was appointed was a political appointee.

Q: What happened to him?

ROCKWELL: He eventually got another post, but he didn't get this one.

Q: Was this because there was a feeling that Morocco was too sensitive to turnover to a political appointee or was it just personalities?

ROCKWELL: I don't really know the answer, but my belief is that Senator Fulbright considered that this man was not the appropriate person to send to Morocco, possibly because I think he was of Jewish background. I'm not sure of that, but anyway, I was the Department's candidate. When he failed the confirmation, I was then put forward.

Q: Before going out there, you already, of course, were dealing with Near Eastern affairs. But did you have any instructions or any stated objectives from the State Department when you went out to Morocco, or was it just, "Go out there and do a good job"?

ROCKWELL: That's more or less it. Our relations with Morocco were tranquil. Obviously it was far removed from the Middle East, and it was just to keep things ship-shape. There were no specific instructions except the usual ones of promoting American business

interests. We had a Voice of America relay station, we had a naval communications unit. We were supposed to maintain those.

Q: You went out there in 1970. How did you see the situation in Morocco at that time?

ROCKWELL: It was another of these one-man countries like Iran, and there was unrest because of that. There was a feeling, especially among the younger people, that there should be greater democratic participation. But the main problem turned out to be the corruption that was endemic there.

Q: The one-man rule, this was King Hassan. He had been King for how long by that time?

ROCKWELL: He succeeded his father in February of 1961. The country became independent in '56. His father died. I guess he was on the throne certainly 9 years.

Q: So the corruption could be laid at least to the fact that the King didn't do something about it.

ROCKWELL: Yes. In fact, members of his own family were involved.

Q: Did we see corruption as being a problem, as far as the United States was concerned?

ROCKWELL: No.

Q: This was just something we reported on?

ROCKWELL: It was something that we were concerned about, because it affected the stability of the regime. In some cases it was American companies who were having the bite put on them.

Q: You mentioned that the United States, as a government, our interest was in tranquil relations, our relay station, and our naval base there. But what were our commercial interests there?

ROCKWELL: Quite limited. Morocco was not a good market for U.S. products. It was pretty much tied up with France. Except for a limited amount of tourist type stuff like a hotel, U.S. commercial relations were really not terribly important. Phosphates, perhaps. But we were a competitor in phosphates.

Q: But you didn't find that there was a dominant American commercial interest that guided you, or that you had to be watching this all the time?

ROCKWELL: No. The Moroccans didn't make it easy for Americans to engage in commercial activities.

Q: Did you find much of your time spent trying to help American commercial firms do business there?

ROCKWELL: Yes, that was one of the roles of the embassy, and particularly commercial firms that got into trouble because of the ambivalent attitude of the Moroccans toward contracts. We had to help them try to resolve some of these disputes they were having. Goodyear, for example.

Q: When you say "ambivalent attitude," a contract was only good as long as it served the purpose?

ROCKWELL: That's right. What was good one year wasn't necessarily good the next year.

Q: In doing these interviews and my experience also as a reporting officer, one of the hardest things to do is to report on corruption, not because it's not there, but one always is a bit concerned that if you over-report on corruption, this will begin to either be leaked to

the United States press, and then the next thing you know, you're going to have to answer to a leak in the other country, or else that you may so disgust the policy makers if you talk about corruption, that they may make some decisions which are not really based on American interests, but ones of abhorrence of corruption. Did you find this was a problem, how to report on it?

ROCKWELL: No. I think we reported regularly on the corruption factor, but since the American commercial interest in Morocco was so limited, it wasn't a dominant characteristic of our reporting or of our daily life in Morocco. It was just a fact of life that if a foreign firm wanted to get something in the way of a contract or permission to build something, they had to grease the way. Of course, it's not only in Morocco that that happens; it's well known throughout the Middle East and Far East, for that matter.

It seems, as it turned out, that people who were really more concerned than anybody were some of the Moroccans themselves, who felt that their country's good name was being besmirched, and that the King was not doing enough about it.

Q: Did you have any problems meeting with what would amount to the opposition in Morocco? You didn't feel the same constraints that you felt when you were in Iran?

ROCKWELL: No. The opposition was also not so well organized or as meaningful as it was in Iran.

Q: How would you describe, from your perspective, the role of King Hassan?

ROCKWELL: It's a one-man rule, certainly, and I think that King Hassan turned out to be extremely clever, a good maneuverer, a good survivor, in a sense, a courageous person. I think it has to be said also that at least the time I was there, most of the Moroccans were apolitical. They expected to have a monarch, and all they really wanted was that the monarch do a good job. They didn't conceive of Morocco without a King, except possibly for some of the younger elements, the student people. So I would think that Hassan has

been a pretty good King for that country, a pretty good ruler. I don't happen to think that his standards are the same as the normal Anglo-Saxon ones, but why should they be? He's not an Anglo-Saxon.

Q: Did the United States play any role in giving help or advice, or was whatever there was of this nature really French? Would you say that France was the dominant foreign power, if there was such a thing as a dominant power?

ROCKWELL: The U.S. gave quite a lot of advice because we got involved with military assistance and economic assistance in Morocco, and also relations with the French were quite strained because of the expropriation of the French colonial interests there and the seizure of the land that the French were farming. So I would say that the French rather withdrew from direct participation. They had their cooperants, their young men and women who went out there to teach and that kind of thing, but that was principally in the interest of maintaining the language. So insofar as meaningful programs were concerned in the country, the French were not in a terribly important position when I was there.

Q: We were looked upon as being the main source to turn to for certain types of assistance.

ROCKWELL: Yes, I guess so, but the Moroccans always complained that we didn't give them enough. Of course, it was a modest program compared to what we were doing in Iran.

Q: Were there any repercussions there of the Vietnam War or opening to China or any of those things?

ROCKWELL: It seems to me the Moroccans sent some sort of a contingent to Vietnam, medical people or something. Yes, they made a contribution. For a while, we thought the Moroccans were going to vote with us on the two-China question. They almost did, and

then they backed down at the last moment. Having told us they would vote yes, they voted to abstain.

Q: You were at a very famous birthday party.

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: This is on July 14, 1971. I wonder if you could tell what happened.

ROCKWELL: This was the King's annual celebration of his birthday, which took place at his summer palace south of Rabat, between Rabat and Casablanca, at Skhirat. It usually involved all the notables of the realm and all the chiefs of foreign diplomatic missions. It was a stag party, and everybody was very informally dressed in sports clothes, and there were opportunities for golf and tennis and swimming and clay pigeon shooting, but mainly for a huge banquet at mid-day in this summer palace. It was a very sportive affair, supposed to be, until just as we were about to go in to sit down to lunch, we heard these sort of popping sounds, and somebody said, “Oh, the King has arranged fireworks for us this year.”

And until people started to fall with blood pouring out of them, we realized that the palace was being attacked, and the King's entourage, especially the military members, rushed out to defend it and were cut down. The rest of us were trapped inside or out on the golf course or wherever we might be. There must have been a thousand guests there, at least.

Eventually, the guard was overcome and the attackers forced us all out of the palace and required us to lie down in front while they searched for the King, who had hidden in the men's room of the palace, which they didn't know about, with some of his key people. They never found him until the very end, but at that time, the command of the rebels had figured out that the King had fled to Rabat somehow, so they had gone to Rabat to try to catch him.

When the subordinates finally uncovered him and realized that contrary to what they had been told, that the King, instead of being endangered by devious foreign types and disloyal Moroccans, was being endangered by themselves, they reversed their attitude and declared their loyalty to him. The King dispatched General Oufkir to Rabat to get control of the city, which was being attacked by the rebel group. In fact, the Ministry of Information had been seized and the radio was under rebel control. So the ringleaders were court-martialed instantly and shot.

It turned out to be an offshoot of this problem I mentioned earlier, that the head of the military household of the King was a very personable officer who was personally affronted by the degree of corruption and felt the King was not doing enough about it, and felt that the King should make way for the Crown Prince. He got the cooperation of Colonel Ababou, who was the head of the cadet academy at Fez, and owing to the position of the head of the military household, it was possible to infiltrate during the night 1,000 or 1,200 of these young men, cadets, into the surroundings of the palace. They were the ones that attacked the palace, who had been told apparently that the King was in danger, and that it was their patriotic duty to liberate him.

But obviously, what happened, apparently, was that Colonel Ababou decided that this was a good opportunity to get rid of the King and establish a sort of Libyan-style republic. The fact of the matter is that Colonel Ababou asked the head of the military household where the King was, and the man knew where he was, because I saw him lead the King into his hiding place, and he didn't let on. So Colonel Ababou had him executed right then, right on the spot, as being a traitor to the cause. So there were two people with different motives.

Q: What happened to you and the other diplomats?

ROCKWELL: We were lying on our faces outside the palace until the King was uncovered by the cadets who were left in charge, and as soon as they laid down their arms, everything returned to normal. It was very strange. I mean, there we were with all our

limousines parked down in the parking lot. Although the Belgian ambassador had been shot dead and the Syrian was wounded, we all went back to Rabat, and the countryside seemed perfectly normal. People were selling fish by the roadside, there were swimmers at the beaches. It was hard to believe that this bloody event, which must have cost the lives of about 130 people, had occurred only two hours or so ago.

Q: Makes one realize that diplomacy and getting close to someone in power is not always the best place to be.

ROCKWELL: That's right.

Q: Was there any role that the United States played in this?

ROCKWELL: No, it had nothing to do with the United States.

Q: There was another attack on the King. This was on August 16, 1972, when he was coming back from Paris, when he was attacked by his own air force which was escorting him. These planes, were they American planes?

ROCKWELL: They were American planes piloted by English-speaking Moroccans who had been trained in the United States. They were based at Kenitra, which was where the U.S. naval communications unit was. So all this was very suspicion-making. But the fact remains that our people at that base had no idea what the Moroccan pilots were up to. The hangar and the environs of where the planes were were declared off limits to them. They didn't speak Arabic or French. So we didn't have any idea that these pilots were plotting to do the King in.

Q: Did the King wonder about our role?

ROCKWELL: Oh, instantly everybody said the U.S. must have known about it, and if we didn't tell the King, that was therefore very unfriendly. Yes, I'm sure he did, although it

doesn't make much sense for us to try to kill the King of Morocco. That type of a situation is ripe for that kind of interpretation.

Q: Did you find yourself making special representation to the King, to let him know?

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: Did he seem to accept this?

ROCKWELL: He seemed to accept it, but I don't think he did. I think that it was a shadow over the rest of my career in Morocco.

Q: There's always the feeling that somehow, if anything happens, I know this was true when I was in Greece and many other countries, they always think, "Aha! The United States is behind this."

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: And the more you protest, the less likely you are to be believed.

ROCKWELL: That's right. But you had to admit that the circumstances are very suspicious.

Q: Where were you when this happened?

ROCKWELL: I wasn't even in the country. I was on home leave, as I recall it.

Q: Again I ask my unclassified question. How did you find the work of the CIA in Morocco? Was it giving you good information? Did it seem to be inobtrusive?

ROCKWELL: Yes, it was all right. They seemed to be spending most of their time dealing with out-of-country matters, like who the Algerians were sending in or whether the

Russians had any agents. There again, the situation in Morocco itself was not one that was so dynamic that a lot of information was needed or available.

Q: It really wasn't a place where spies hung out and exchanged information and that type of thing.

ROCKWELL: That's right.

Q: Not being a front line state with Israel, our concerns there must have been minor.

ROCKWELL: Of course, they had the usual good relations with the Moroccan security service, and they sometimes produced some rather interesting information about who the King was going to throw out of office or promote or do something like that.

Q: The CIA reporting, as far as you knew, did you share the information they had of what went on?

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, I'm speaking to you now as a former consular officer. You must have found yourself much more involved with Americans who got into trouble because of the hashish and all, didn't you, in Morocco? Wasn't there a real protection problem there?

ROCKWELL: Well, no, because it was perfectly easy to get hashish in Morocco, and the Moroccans were very relaxed about people who bought it. The problem usually resulted from people who left Morocco and got picked up in Spain for carrying this stuff. But we didn't have very many cases of people who were picked up in Morocco. There were two or three that I can remember.

Q: Morocco seems to have been on the tourist circuit, particularly the young students.

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: Including, I think, at the time, my daughter went through there. So you must have had a great flow in and out of young people.

ROCKWELL: Yes, there were a number of them, but they didn't seem to get into an extraordinary number of problems with the local authorities. They were tolerated. They went to Marrakech and Tangier, sat around smoking pot, I suppose. It was not a major problem.

Q: We have a consulate in Tangier, one of our oldest. That came under you. Did you find that a very useful post?

ROCKWELL: No.

Q: It was more there than for historical purposes, did you think?

ROCKWELL: Yes. Tangier is a backwater, as far as Morocco is concerned. It used to be important when it was an international zone, but nothing much happened up there. Well, nothing much happened anywhere except Rabat, really. The commercial capital is Casablanca.

Q: Do we have a post in Casablanca?

ROCKWELL: A Consul General.

Q: Was this a useful post for you?

ROCKWELL: Well, yes, insofar as there were American business interests that were concentrated in Casablanca.

Q: You then became Deputy Chief of Protocol from 1974 to 1978. How did you view this appointment?

ROCKWELL: I viewed it with some misgivings, because I felt it was not a substantive job and that I would have preferred to have another mission, but it turned out to be a very interesting job, and certainly one had some fascinating experiences. It was not a substantive job.

Q: Why did you get this particular job?

ROCKWELL: I think the reason was that there had been a succession of political appointees as Chief of Protocol, and I think the personnel people felt that it would be useful to have a career deputy in that job.

Q: You served under two Chiefs of Protocol, Henry Catto and Shirley Temple Black.

ROCKWELL: And then Evan Dobelle.

Q: At least two of those, although political appointees, Henry Catto came from El Salvador, and Shirley Temple Black came from Ghana. At least they had at one point been ambassadors to those countries, so they weren't complete novices in the field of diplomacy.

ROCKWELL: That's true. They weren't.

Q: What did your job involve?

ROCKWELL: Actually, it involved doing anything the Chiefs of Protocol didn't want to do or didn't have time to do, assigned me to do, and that was usually to share the burden of these foreign visits and all the things that went with it, preparing the briefing papers, arranging the entertaining and the travel, accompanying them to the White House. Also, we were involved, of course, in the President's travel overseas.

Q: You were there during a very interesting period. For one thing, on travel, you were there during the end of the Nixon era, where at the very end he was taking trips, in a way, it

seemed to be to stay out of the country more than anything else. Did you get involved in those trips?

ROCKWELL: No. The Nixon White House excluded the protocol office from those trips.

Q: Any particular reason for doing this?

ROCKWELL: I think it was just the zealousness of the advance people in the White House at that time.

Q: How did you get along with the White House normally?

ROCKWELL: On the whole, pretty well. I mean, certainly at the working level.

Q: Can you give me any examples of things you might have gotten involved in of interest?

ROCKWELL: Of general interest, we were heavily involved in the Bicentennial celebration, and particularly in the Tall Ships sail past in New York Harbor, and all the chiefs of mission were invited aboard the aircraft carrier. I've forgotten what the name of it was.

Q: USS Enterprise?

ROCKWELL: We had to shepherd them up there and get them aboard the carrier, get them off and get them back to Washington, make sure that they were comfortably treated.

Various of the State dinners, particularly if there was an important visitor, were of interest, such as when the Shah came, all the stops were pulled out. Or the President of France.

That kind of thing was more the highlights, but the daily routine in the office dealt with the care and feeding of the diplomatic corps here, the foreign diplomatic corps, the question of gifts to U.S. officials by foreign representatives, the problem of entertaining people, the management of Blair House, for example, the guest house. That kind of thing.

Q: So it's a major administrative job. Let's take the two. What was Henry Catto's method of operation?

ROCKWELL: He's basically a very relaxed person.

Q: A good Texan.

ROCKWELL: Yes. He had good relationships with the White House. Actually, all those people that had that job seemed to me to be quite skillful. Shirley Black was certainly a capable Chief of Protocol.

Q: She has made somewhat of a contribution to protocol in that she sometimes returns and gives briefings on protocol problems. She took quite an interest in it. Coming from the film background, did this add anything?

ROCKWELL: Sure. People were interested in her, you know, Shirley Temple. She was one of the things to see if you were a foreigner and you were invited to Washington. You certainly wanted to meet Shirley Temple. But she was much more than that. She was a competent person and she took a serious interest.

Q: I must say, looking at old films, you look at that small child, and you're really talking about somebody who is very bright. Right at the beginning, she must have had a very high IQ in order to do that.

ROCKWELL: No doubt.

Q: And the competence, I guess, has continued. Were there any great problems that you had to deal with when you were working in protocol?

ROCKWELL: I don't think so, no. There were numerous administrative difficulties and transportation problems, airplanes that didn't arrive and caterers who didn't work the way they were supposed to, and people who refused to go where they were supposed to go,

such as during the signing of the Panama Accords. We were responsible for seating all the foreign ministers and the heads of state. The foreign ministers were supposed to be in a separate section from the heads of state, and some of them refused to leave their head of state. One had to practically push them out because there were just that many seats for heads of state. That kind of thing, but it's not a great problem.

Q: Did you have any problems, say, with a chief of state who just left in a huff?

ROCKWELL: No, not during the time I was there. One of our problems always was the King of Morocco, who would cancel at the last moment when he was invited on a state visit. He wouldn't leave once he got here, but it was very hard to get him to arrive.

Q: Did people sort of point to you and expect you to straighten it out?

ROCKWELL: Fortunately not, because he'd done this before. He did it while I was there. He backed out at the last minute.

Q: Just a character trait or was it for security reasons?

ROCKWELL: One never really knows the reasons. Obviously he thought it was not in his interest to be seen with the Americans at this particular time, probably because of something that was happening with the Palestine problem. Also, there's always been the talk that his mother is very superstitious. She would decide the stars weren't right.

Q: Sounds familiar. We're both laughing because there have been stories in the last few months that Nancy Reagan, the President's wife, has her own astrologer to decide what things would be done because of the stars. This is not something only for Moroccan protocol.

One of the things that's been done fairly recently in the field of protocol, of policing diplomats, is to insist on rather strict reciprocal rights, mainly because the feeling is that we've always been rather laissez faire about diplomats in the United States, but our own

diplomats are often put under rather strict restraints in other countries. Were there any efforts made to try to correct this while you were in protocol?

ROCKWELL: We had in place the regulations for the Soviet diplomats, and nothing much happened about that when I was there. They continued to be restricted, as our people were in Moscow.

Q: In these interviews, I've talked to several Chiefs of Protocol, Henry Catto, Marion Smoak, and Alberado Valdez, asking them about the role of the Chief of Protocol. Several of them have mentioned that they felt the Chief of Protocol often was underused, you might say, from a political or policy point of view, in that they do, because of the job, stay with the visiting chiefs of state for a long time and are in a position to both report on but also maybe to have a certain amount of contact with chiefs of state that often an ambassador to that country never would have, just because of propinquity in traveling, but that there's no effort made on the part of the desk or the political section to say, "Look, if you're there and you have a chance, here's what our policy is. Do whatever you can to support it." Do you feel that this is a missed opportunity?

ROCKWELL: Henry Catto felt very strongly about that, and he and I used to prepare memoranda of our conversations with these people. I mean, after all, the Chief of Protocol receives the briefing book. He knows what the policy is. It's up to him. I don't see that the desk has to nudge him. If he's any good, he ought to be able to keep his antennae alert and pick up whatever he can. It isn't as if the circumstances are all that fortuitous. I mean, usually you're going from one place to another in a limousine; you're not just sitting around drinking with this person for hours on end. The opportunity isn't all that great. Also, a lot of these people don't want to talk to somebody who is not on the substantive side. They're not about to get involved in a delicate conversation with somebody who they consider not to be really important enough.

Q: We usually close these interviews by asking several questions. Looking back on your career, what would you say was one of your greatest satisfactions or accomplishments?

ROCKWELL: I consider that probably the greatest satisfaction I've had, it sounds a little overweening, perhaps, is to represent my country in a favorable way to foreigners, and to counteract in some way the impression that some people have that Americans are not necessarily very expert in dealing with foreign affairs and foreigners. I have felt that I was good at the representational side of things. I've felt also that in connection with the Middle East, that I was able to provide a balanced view and a balanced influence in an emotional issue at a delicate time.

Apart from that, I took great satisfaction in the Foreign Service as a career, as a way of life. I found it extremely interesting and broadening. I think I had good luck at both the people I served under and in the posts I had, even though I almost lost my life on two occasions.

Q: Other than the King's birthday, what was the other occasion?

ROCKWELL: In Jerusalem.

Q: You were there when the Consul General was shot.

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: You were in the alley with him.

ROCKWELL: Yes. So I guess my feeling of satisfaction is a general one rather than a specific one.

Q: What about frustrations? Do you have any particular thing that you wish had been done differently or you would have done something differently, or you were involved in something that could have been done differently?

ROCKWELL: I think one of the frustrations of this kind of a career, especially in the State Department, is the problem of dealing with a bureaucracy within the Department and with other agencies. I found that one of the most frustrating parts of being assigned to Washington, that it was so hard to get anything done quickly unless one could get the Secretary to order it to be done immediately.

Q: As you're looking at this particular problem, you served under the Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter Administrations. Did any of these administrations have a little better control over the bureaucracy, or the bureaucracy goes on, no matter who's at the helm?

ROCKWELL: Well, the bureaucracy goes on, obviously, no matter who's the President. It has to. Departments have to be run. I felt that the Republican administration under Eisenhower and Dulles had more control of the bureaucracy. I also felt, obviously, that Henry Kissinger had a major control of the bureaucracy, and he was able to get things done merely because of the force of his personality and the fact that he occupied two positions. He was at NSC, and then he came over to the Department. I felt that the Johnson Administration had no control to speak of, it was not notable for control of the bureaucracy.

I remember going way back to Franklin Roosevelt, when there hardly was any bureaucracy. Things were much simpler in those days.

Q: Speaking of those days as opposed to now, you had, as you said, a very satisfying career in the Foreign Service. But from what you can gather, how do you view the Foreign

Service today? If someone were to ask about recommendation to join the Foreign Service, to go into it, how do you view that as a career today?

ROCKWELL: I think one has to have a basic interest in foreign affairs, obviously, and if that is the case, I think the Foreign Service is still a desirable career, as long as you're not going to feel that you've failed in it if you don't become an ambassador. I think the Service is having a difficult time in its administration, and particular forces are combining to alter the way things are done, the way promotions are made and all that. But when you come right down to it, the essence of the Foreign Service is foreign service, and that still is going on and is still an interesting thing to do, at least for part of one's working life.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, I've enjoyed this very much and I want to thank you.

ROCKWELL: You're welcome. I've enjoyed it also.

End of interview